

Point Three



The Toc H magazine
December 1980 10p



'A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS'

Point Three

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Letters and articles are welcomed and should be addressed to the Toc H Editorial Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911). Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

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The front cover picture was taken at last year's Christmas party run in 'Tubby's Nursery School' by Toc H Bombay.

Photo: S G Shenoy



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House – the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points – to think fairly.

Guest Editorial

Christmas has been popular in the west from pre-Christian times. Then, for the Celts it started at what is now Michaelmas, All Saints, and All Souls – the end of October and the beginning of November. These three days were the end of the year, the sinking of the Sun. The battle between Sun and Moon for supremacy of the heavens went on until January, when the sun began to get stronger and the days to lengthen. The high day of the feasting was 25 December – to the Romans the feast of the 'Unconquered Sun'. It was given over to drinking and eating, the bringing in of the sacred boughs (evergreens, holly and ivy), the burning of the Yule Log and the lighting of bonfires, kept alight to assist the sun in its struggle to return.

The Yuletide food was basically the same as our traditional Christmas fare – mead, punch, plum porridge (the same ingredients as Christmas pudding), mince pies. The mince pies had a magical significance: one had to be eaten every day for 12 days from 25 December to 6 January, when the feast ended. The 12 days were symbolic of the year.

The mistletoe was magic and sacred. Cut with a golden knife by the Druid, it hung in the centre of the chieftain's hall as an emblem of peace. Anyone with a quarrel was required to give the kiss of peace beneath it. The holly boy (later the Christmas fool) was the symbol of the sun and was symbolically beheaded and then resurrected.

Early Christian missionaries found people reluctant to give up their merry feast. It was decided to Christianise it, and as no one was absolutely sure of the date of the birth of Christ it was agreed to turn this feast into the celebration of the birth of the 'Unconquered SON', the Light of the World. The symbols remained the same: the fir tree, the giving of gifts and the Crib came much later.

The Crib was instituted by St Francis. Walking through a wood, he came upon some charcoal burners who did not know it was the time of the Christmas feast. He built them a Crib beneath a fir tree and together they celebrated. The idea became popular on the Continent but it was not until Victorian times that it became a custom in the English home. However the Christmas Tree grew in importance and came to dominate the centre of the living room, superseding the Crib.

Father Christmas is a composite figure, made up of Odin, St Nicholas and King Wenceslas – all bringers of gifts. Odin rode through the country on his massive horse at the time of the winter solstice, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked. St Nicholas brought a dowry to three poor girls who were unable to get married. He put the money at dead of night into their sabots standing beneath the chimney piece: hence the hanging of the stocking and the ritual of coming down the chimney which fathers suffer at this time. King Wenceslas needs no explanation – it is all in the carol. The basis of it all is the giving of gifts in return for the great gift we have received in the birth of Jesus.

All this seems a far cry from the present day. Christmas begins at the end of August. We are inundated with catalogues and displays of cards, pagan as well as Christian. Father Christmases appear by the hundred on the streets and in the shops. Artificial decorations replace the living evergreen and the living flame of the bonfire is supplanted by the electric fire. The Yule Log is made of chocolate and the mistletoe of sugar. Councils argue about street decorations and whether or not to allow religious groups to put up a street Crib. The feasting round the hearth is replaced by office parties. The Church bewails commercialisation, and shop keepers rejoice in the constant ringing of the till. Many cannot wait for the great day to pass before setting up the sign of the next feast – 'The Sale' whose devotees spend the night in vigil before the shop door in order to be the first to gain the gift of 'the bargain'. The day after 25 December is no longer the feast of St Stephen, but the first day of the Winter Sales.

We are told that we are no longer a Christian nation; that soon we shall hear the children as they grow up say 'there isn't any Jesus' just as they now say 'there isn't any Father Christmas'. Many of our Asian neighbours must be puzzled at our way of celebrating a Holy Feast. They must look in wonder at the frenetic preparations which cater so much for the body and question in their minds 'where is the place for the God whose birth we are celebrating?' Perhaps Robert Graves was right when he said 'the West is still nominally Christian, but it is now really governed by the god of wealth and the god of science'.

Our new generation utter the same sentiments and many are turning their eyes to the East. This could be the full circle of the wheel: as the Faith first came from the East, renewal may also come from there. As in those first days in the midst of our noisy bustling, we appear to have no room for Him; we squeeze Him out of our preparations and eventually He becomes a refugee just as He did at the very first Christmas.

– Megan John

What's happening in N WALES & N W?

Huw Gibbs writes to tell us of the real sense of movement he detects in his particular part of the Region (ie North Wales and Marches). They have opened an office in Mold; Sir Alfred McAlpine Ltd have presented them with a minibus to help in all Toc H activities; thanks to the Manpower Service Commission, they have office and projects 'back up'. As the pictures here illustrate, they have been very busy in the area throughout 1980.



Photo: Graham Cathall

Lined up with the new minibus are (L to R): Bob Parry (Mold District Chairman), Sir Alfred McAlpine Ltd, Gill Moore (supervisor of N Wales projects), Huw Gibbs (Regional staff) and Percy Freeman (honorary Regional staff, based in Mold).

At this year's Merseyside camp, Saughall Branch again provided grounds and equipment.



Photo: Aled Oldfield

'Why should I have two jockeys just because I'm a man? Volunteer Rosemary Barradell from London and Regional staff man Huw Gibbs take part in the camp 'horse race'.



Photo: Aled Oldfield

This year, Llanarmon Yn Ial Branch sponsored a Hill Skills Holiday for 15 children from the new town of Milton Keynes. The project was run under canvas and included climbing, canoeing, riding, hill walking and map reading. A number of local organisations joined in to help. 'There were spills and thrills in plenty ... But the overall impression was that the kids had an exciting adventure and their own conclusion was "smashing: can we come again next year?"'

At the end of the holiday, each child was presented by Llanarmon Branch Chairman with a certificate of achievement and a Toc H lapel badge. The feeling of pride made all the effort worthwhile.

Ian Taylor, then Development Officer at Toc H's national centre at Port Penrhyn, demonstrates how to wear a buoyancy aid.

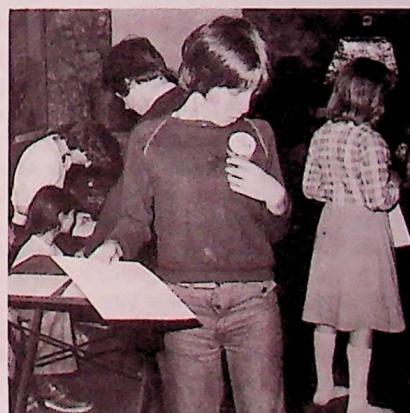


Photo: Aled Oldfield

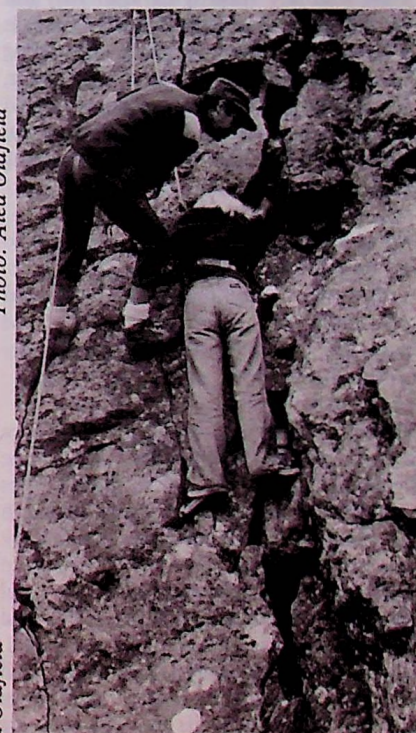


Photo: Aled Oldfield

'You're not going to fall, lass: there's a foothold to your right'. With the help of the climbing instructor, Daan made it to the top.

For your diary

The 1981 Bangor Summer School will take place from 29 June to 4 July. Further details will be published soon. All enquiries and applications to: Cyril Carrier, 367 Hungerford Road, Crewe, Cheshire.

Alison House Holiday Weeks 1981

June 4 - 11	Flo Hunter (Hostess)
July 11 - 18	Violet Walker (Hostess)
July 18 - 25	Norman Brew (Host)
July 25 - Aug 1	Elsa Perrin (Hostess)
August 1 - 8	Let's go Painting (Tutor - Harry Muscutt)
August 8 - 15	Marjorie Berry (Hostess)

Charges:

Single room (9 only available) £50 per week (inc VAT)

Shared twin or 3 bedded room £47 per week (inc VAT)

Please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope with your application for a booking form to: Alan Robson, Alison House, Intake Lane, Cromford, Nr Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3RH.

Tools for the Third World

by Peter Ranken

Have you any tools lying idle? Why not send them to the Third World? There is a need by craftsmen in many developing countries for good quality hand tools. Meanwhile, in the industrialised world many such tools are rusting unused, in sheds, garages and workshops, waiting to be thrown away.

What *Tools for Self Reliance* aims to do is to link these two situations by co-ordinating the collection and refurbishment of these tools and shipping them for distribution in the Third World.

What is important, though, is that the collection and distribution of tools is undertaken by the local communities at both ends of the chain. Collection in Britain is done by local community groups (such as Toc H groups and Branches) who also organise a local workshop where the tools are sorted and the sound ones cleaned and sharpened. Packing and shipping is then organised by *Tools for Self Reliance*. Distribution in the Third World is through existing local bodies who send the tools to craftsmen working in villages and farms, and not to the local elite.*

In this way a personal link is made between ordinary people in the West and craftsmen in the developing world. What Toc H can do is to set up local collecting centres and workshops to collect, sort and clean unused tools. This is important for Toc H since direct links have not yet really been made between our groups and Branches in Britain and the Third World communities we want to help.

* Of the three shipments that have been made so far, one has been to an agricultural co-operative in Guinea Bissau and two to crafts training centres in Tanzania where the tools are made up into kits to be taken back to the villages. At no stage are the tools sold for personal use. The types of tools that have been sent are: hammers, wood planes, screw-drivers, wood chisels, files, wood saws, soldering irons, vices and clamps, drills and bits, pincers and pliers, braces and hand drills, etc.

Further information can be had from:

Tools for Self Reliance
1 Little Anglesey
Gosport
Hants PO12 2HS
(Tel. 070 17 22179)

OR

Geoff Allen
2 St James Road
Shirley
Southampton
Hants SO1 5FH
(Tel. 0703 583575)

In Brief...

● The Secretary of Market Rasen (Lincs) Men's Branch writes to thank all the members of his Branch who gave up a recent Saturday to run an autumn fair in aid of a Lincoln Hospital's appeal for a body scanner. He tells us that all his ten members are very busy chaps but always ready to help. The Lincoln appeal is for £1.5 million so any donation received by the Branch is most welcome.

● West Somerset District's 'Thank You' Guest Night, attended by over 60 people who have helped Toc H during the past few years, had as the first part of its programme a live edition of 'Desert Island Discs'. Devised and produced by a freelance professional radio reporter, the session featured two local 'castaways' - Miss 'Don' Crockett, Taunton's Secretary, and Branch Chairman, Jim Eaton. Don's life story included growing up as one of a family of 10 children, working for many years as Headmaster's Secretary in a well known public school, and war time service as a naval nurse. Jim Eaton joined Toc H in China in 1934, having had to wait two years for the arrival of a Toc H member, after being inspired by Tubby Clayton and Pat Leonard who had paid a flying visit. War time service in the siege of Tobruk, and as one of Wingate's Chindits in Burma, was followed by 26 years as Mayor's Officer and Mace Bearer in Taunton. Both castaways felt they would survive quite well and neither showed any inclination to try to escape from the island: the highly appreciative audience suspected that they would be too busy forming a desert island Toc H to have any such thoughts as building a raft! The Mayor and Mayoress of Taunton Deane, the Regional Chairman and Treasurer, and CEC member Marjorie Porter, were guests of honour at the event which also featured the traditional spread of food for which this District has become well known, the Toc H tape/slide programme, and a short talk about Toc H by Regional Padre, Keith Beck. District Chairman, Win Osborne, welcomed the guests and chaired the programme.

● Revd Clifford Small has been padre to Ashby de la Zouch (Leics) Branch for the past 15 years. He is now moving to Cheltenham and the Ashby Branches recently gave a farewell party for him and his wife, Sylvia, presenting them with a gift of crystal glassware and a bouquet of flowers. The Men's Branch write to say that Clifford had been an inspiration to them over the years and that they will miss him greatly, while accepting that their loss is Cheltenham's gain.

● Ted Tanner, a founder member of Tetbury (Glos) Men's Branch, writes to remind us that this is their 50th anniversary year. Noting that Nelson (NZ) is also in its 50th year, Tetbury have sent them a special greeting — very appropriately since this year's World Chain of Light starts from Nelson. In each active year of their life, Tetbury have directed their main activities towards the aged and the infirm in their area. They started a Tetbury Women's Branch (thriving!), a Senior Citizen's Fellowship and a 'Pop-Inn' serving tea and coffee in the town. Ted himself has held most Branch and District offices and has served two terms as Central Councillor. He lives in a house called 'Poperinghe': Tubby visited him in 1966 when the house was being built and gave it his blessing. Congratulations, Tetbury and well done, Ted!

● Some three years ago, Ashby de la Zouch Branch celebrated a conversion and upgrading of their premises. A large meeting room and a fitted kitchen and cloakroom on the ground floor have made possible extended use of the building by the Ashby Branches and by other groups in the town. The Branch borrowed a sum from HQ to carry out the work and recently decided to raise the final £300 needed to clear the loan. The Derbyshire Building Society gave them the use of an empty shop for one week. A generous public poured in furniture, books, china and glass for sale and the week showed a nett return of over £500. Ashby has now cleared its loan, given a handsome donation to Pannikampatti and a sum to Family Purse.

● We have just had from Nelson Parker a full and enthusiastic report of the East Midlands Area day of celebration held at Kimbolton at the end of August. Some 230 members from 30 Branches arrived to share the events of the day. And it rained. . . and rained. . . and rained! (How often have we heard that this year?) Fortunately Kimbolton School had made rooms available so that there was nothing to stop the initial cup of tea and chatter. Then the friendly Curator took those interested on a fascinating tour of Kimbolton Castle while others had a conducted walk round the church. A Rededication Service was conducted by Revd Crispin White. After a break for tea, more talk and the inevitable meeting of old friends, everyone gathered in the school's Lewis Hall for Light, a heart warming address by George Lee and homegoing prayers. Nelson claims that he has not heard a complaint about anything, from anybody. As he says, 'In Toc H, that is quite something'.

The Wider Family

Chile

The International Secretary, Keith Rea, has heard recently from the Pilot of Valparaiso (Chile) Branch and we thought you would like to share their news:

'... For several years we have concentrated on helping two girls' homes which harbour a total of 62 girls from the ages of five to 18 years. We make a monthly donation to staple foods, knit warm garments for them for the winter, provide a little pocket money for them and entertain them on special occasions. We also help a Chilean Presbyterian church which gives a good free lunch to 40 children every weekday throughout the year and twice a month gives out parcels of food, clothes, simple medicines and good advice to some 20 very needy mothers of children up to the age of six.

Our Branch has recently celebrated its 50th anniversary* with a simple Service followed by a tea and a short programme. We were very pleased that five of the members of the Santiago Branch were able to come as well as approximately 70 from Valparaiso and Vina del Mar, many of them from the British and American communities and a good number of Chileans, some of whom speak no English at all. The Rt Revd Brian Skinner (Anglican Missionary Bishop) conducted the Service in English but gave an excellent sermon in Spanish on the symbolism of the Toc H lamp which lights the way for others without benefit for itself. We are hoping to attract more members as several of our visitors showed interest in our Movement...

* Actually, the 53rd anniversary — the Branch was founded in 1927.

Note: Congratulations and best wishes from us all — Editor

● The Secretary of Medway & Sheppey Joint District writes to tell us of 'an evening to remember'. This was the occasion in October of their annual District Service. Some 80 members and friends sat down at 5 o'clock for tea (arranged by Wigmore Women's Branch) and a 'get together'. The Service (at St Peter's Centre, Gillingham) began at 7 o'clock and was conducted by District Padre Revd Colin Elliott and Regional Padre Revd 'Polly' Perkins. The guest speaker was Revd John Hull, the Toc H Chaplain.

New Zealand

A MESSAGE

The following piece has reached us from Wanganui, New Zealand. It is a message prepared by a lady who knew she was dying and, by her special request, it was read to the mourners at the funeral.

— Editor

Well, here we all are together, some friends and relatives to see me off, and please let there be no tears, no remorse, or sadness for I go with such gratitude in my heart for the genuine kindness and concern always you have all shown to this old sinner. So cheer up, and enjoy yourselves, laugh and be merry. How blessed I have been throughout my life with such faithful friends, good sons, and truly wonderful daughters-in-law, plus healthy and sound loving grandchildren. What more could I ask for? Nothing.

Sometimes life was not easy in those days so long since gone by but with the help of you all we got by — grit and hard work from my sons who always sustained me, and you my dear friends who never forsook me.

And now I leave for a new land — that one beyond the sunset. Never have I travelled much so this will be my new big adventure — and free too! My belief in God's love, mercy, guidance and forgiveness has strengthened me continually — and His promise of a life to come when we have shed our mortal cover. He has always answered my prayers. I hope this strong faith is with every one of you. Death is not the end — 'tis the beginning — so why mourn? Go ahead and enjoy yourselves.

It's quite impossible for me to name you all, and all you have given me in material things as well as companionship, chats together — guidance from some of you who possess that real wisdom. Oh! so very much to thank you for, and yet I must be brief and let you get on with your refreshments and chatter. Only, all the funny things that have happened, and do leave out gossip, fault finding and criticism, but love your neighbour.

And so farewell to you all — some day I shall meet every one of you and what a glorious re-union that will be. To you all my thanks and my real love.

— Mater

PS: Remember - no tears!

From the Director

by Ken Prideaux-Brune



In considering the contribution which Toc H can make to the International Year of Disabled People we ought, suggested a speaker at the National Youth Conference held at Southampton in September, to start by recognising that all of us are in some way disabled. We all have things we are unable to do — through short-sightedness, cack-handedness, or whatever. Those who are officially labelled disabled may have greater limitations to contend with but, like us, they are people and, like us, they are trying to transcend their individual limitations. The most important task for this special Year (1981, so it starts very soon now) is to change attitudes. All of us need to recognise that disabled people don't want our pity. They don't want our help. They want to be given the chance to help others and to feel that they are needed.

At the Youth Conference we were challenged to consider running fewer projects *for* disabled people and more projects *with* disabled people as full participants. We were told that most disabled people are educated at special schools which are likely to be many miles from their home. On leaving school they return home to a neighbourhood which they scarcely know and where they have few friends. They live with ageing parents and are likely to have great difficulty in finding a job. All too often they simply vegetate. Here is a group with a particular need for friends of their own age and for the opportunity to help others.

* * * * *

When Toc H Branches first came into existence they, like any other organisation, appointed chairmen, secretaries and treasurers. But they also invented two unique officers — the jobmaster and the pilot. The jobmaster's



'Plenty of cake for everyone' at the 19th anniversary party of West Worthing Women's Branch. Special guests were the Branch's friends from Worthing's Polio Fellowship Home.

Photo: Worthing Herald



Exmouth Men's and Women's Branches recently joined with other town organisations to run a Charity Bazaar. Two young visitors were fascinated by the Toc H Lamp and by our Patron's letter of thanks to Women's Branch Chairman Margaret Coulthard who had written to congratulate HM The Queen Mother on her 80th birthday.

Photo: Richard Tarr

function was to keep the Branch aware of the needs of the neighbourhood and to match these needs with the particular skills and interests of individual members. The jobmaster was concerned also to develop the skills of members by encouraging them to undertake new tasks and to widen their experience. The pilot had the responsibility of deepening members' understanding of the Movement, encouraging them to read more widely and to increase their experience of Toc H by participating in activities beyond the confines of the Branch.

Our predecessors were convinced that the uniqueness of Toc H required these two unique functions. And yet, while all Branches continue to have chairmen, secretaries and treasurers, too many no longer have jobmasters or pilots. These special Toc H offices have all too often fallen into disuse. As we seek to

recover our sense of purpose by discussing and acting on the paper 'The Way Forward' we shall surely need to rediscover the crucial importance of these two unique functions. I doubt whether, without them, we shall be able to maintain our uniqueness as a Movement.

These not very original thoughts are prompted by a happy afternoon spent at the Broads District Festival in Norfolk. The programme's contribution of light hearted fun with deep seriousness showed the imprint of the influence of the two pilots in the District. And they also contributed, both as authors and performers, a light hearted ditty and a most moving hymn as an introduction to the Ceremony of Light. Not all pilots can be singers and poets but they can all, like Betty and Len, give care and thought to the shaping of a programme so that it will move the hearts and spirits of those attending — and be fun at the same time.

Generation Gap?

by Judith Rice



It occurred to me, as I flicked through the pages of *Point Three* one day, that one would scarcely know by glancing at the photographs that we are 'a mixture of men'. Or perhaps the all too evident generation gap which lurks amongst these pages, is in fact a faithful reflection of the state of affairs throughout the Movement? The 'youngsters' sport T-shirts and clasp energetic looking spades; the more experienced, apparently, clasp hands and cut birthday cakes. And never the twain shall meet.

Of course it isn't really like that. Not always. Indeed, there are obvious benefits to be gained from those of similar ages and interests working together. But it is shameful that there should not be more regular co-operation and sharing. The sad result is that young volunteers are told of 'The Branches' as of some breed apart; and at conference after conference, stalwart, long serving members talk desperately but vaguely of the need to encourage that rare and unknown bird, 'youth', to join the ranks.

I am 19, I am a Toc H member and I have discovered that when the twain do meet, there is increased understanding, and there is fun.

In a little street somewhere off the Champs Elysees there is a large English Church; in an upper room meet the Toc H Women's Branch of Paris. In early 1980 I went to France as an au pair and soon followed up the contacts I had been given. Even over the telephone, Mme Joyce Jeandenans, the Branch Chairman, overwhelmed me with

her energy, enthusiasm and warmth. So I went to the monthly tea party they give for older members: and though one expects Toc H to be unexpected the vivacity of that chattering room sent me away full of astonishment and delight.

Later, I went to their Branch meeting. There were two young French women: the others, on the whole, were considerably older, were English and had lived for many years in France. An international lawyer advised on wills, a topic of considerable complexity and important to such expatriates. After this I savoured my treasured English tea while the ladies discussed the 'Braderie' they planned to hold the following month. The debate was lengthy, frustrating and at times, of course, tense. What stalls to have and what to serve for lunch were vexing points. I left still feeling astonished, still delighted. I was also a little troubled, for a long talk with Joyce had informed me of the difficulties and worries of a Branch which feels out of the mainstream of Toc H. They suffer partly from the ignorance of those at home, partly from the impossibility of normal voluntary activities under French law. The greatest worry was that the Branch would quite simply die out, and there was sadness and anger that the young English people who frequented the Church not only showed no interest, but scarcely any common civility or desire to help. The impression was one of a Church providing a social club with no social duties: but this is only an impression which I had no opportunity to ratify. I abandoned my

job and returned home rather more quickly than planned — on the very day, as it happened, of the 'Braderie', which I later learned was a tremendous success. But if my experience of France had not been altogether pleasureable, I still retain fond memories of the warmth and humour of that homely pocket of English eccentricity in a little room on the Rue d'Aguesseau.

So I exchanged Paris for Milton Keynes and moved from being an au pair to being a Long Term Volunteer with Toc H — a job which took me to Poperinge in June to help my staff member in the trip he was leading there. Needless to say, I was the youngest in the group, though not this time the only female as on my previous visit. Indeed I shared a room with three ladies who spoke much of feet and corsets! Our ages ranged from 18 to 78. Never exceptionally domesticated, my organisation of meals became extremely traumatic, as I learnt that spaghetti — staple diet of many a project — was as exotic to my fellows as the 'reindeer trout' (sic) which one of them insisted she had tasted with relish in Ireland. I walked fewer miles and worried more about packed lunches than I would perhaps have done on a similar trip with my own age group. But I enjoyed interesting conversation, helpless laughter, wonderful affection and boundless fun. I was forcibly thrown together with some of those awesome figures, the 'Branch members', and found they were really rather nice. I even had a brief and stunning glimpse of what might have been had there been more of me! Our final fling in a restaurant on the last night was transformed by a 19 year old Belgian from a staid meal into a riotous party. He danced with unlikely partners to unlikely music — everyone joined in and everyone enjoyed it. I fumbled to the quickstep and they swayed uncertainly to punk and we stumbled home in the early hours tired and dishevelled and a little surprised. The following morning, the hours before we left felt empty and flat; when we said goodbye we hugged one another and planned to meet again soon — it was just like a project really.

I do not believe that the solution to the 'Generation Gap' is necessarily to be found in getting young people into Branches or Branch members on to projects. It is arguable that in a Movement which has never been afraid to adapt to the times, each of these is an expression of a particular age and generation. But there should be less smugness and less contented ignorance on both sides. And there should be frequent opportunities for the sort of pure, shared fun that I have described. It takes a little humour and a little work. It results in fellowship, understanding and love. It is what Toc H is all about.



Photo: Steve Cowton

Phyllis Mason says 'Thank You' to Toc H in Hull by helping with Withernsea's flag day collection.



Margate Men's and Women's Branches joined forces at a successful 'Fayre' in September in the grounds of Victoria House, Westbrook. Both Branches regularly help to raise funds for Victoria House — a home for the younger disabled.



International Year of Disabled People

Introducing IYDP

In the continuing tradition of United Nations Sponsored Years, 1981 will be devoted to the interests of disabled people. The Government has agreed to participate and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations is co-ordinating the voluntary organisations' response — Stephen Crampton, formerly Secretary of the Standing Conference for Amateur Music, has been appointed Britain's Secretary for International Year of the Disabled 1981, and is based at the NCVO, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. (Tel. 01 636 4066).

Mr Alf Morris MP, is Chairman of the World Planning Group set up by Rehabilitation International, which drew up the charter for IYDP with the main aim of bringing down the physical and attitudinal barriers experienced by disabled people in society and making the public more aware of the needs of disabled people. The United Nations defines disabled people as those having a *physical, mental or sensory handicap*.

As the aim of the Year is 'full participation and equality in society',

this means that disabled people themselves will take a major lead in local initiatives, and there should be no mere 'tokenism'.

The UK title of IYDP 1981 was altered from 'Persons' to 'People' as above. It will not just be a Year *for* disabled people but the Year *of* disabled people and should be promoted primarily *by* disabled people who should provide the main impetus. Disabled people and organisations of disabled people will therefore be the main participants and will pool their resources to make the most valuable contribution in order to make 1981 a most memorable year in its own right. It will emphasise the importance of greater public awareness of the full part to be played in society by disabled people.

The UN General Assembly is proclaiming the IYDP established five principal objectives:

1. Helping disabled persons in their physical and psychological adjustment to society.
2. Promoting all national and

international efforts to provide disabled persons with proper assistance, training, care and guidance, to make available opportunities for suitable work and to ensure their full integration in society.

3. Encouraging study and research projects designed to facilitate the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life, for example by improving their access to public buildings and transportation systems.
4. Educating and informing the public of the rights of disabled persons to participate in and contribute to various aspects of economic, social and political life.
5. Promoting effective measures for the prevention of disability and for the rehabilitation of disabled persons.

I expect that Toc H Branches which are already heavily involved with disabled people will welcome the propaganda and publicity of IYDP 1981. The Year is International and Toc H being an international organisation may have a unique contribution to make. Many

Community Congress 1980

by John Mitchell

In this year's Toc H Annual Report, Ken Prideaux-Brune looked forward to the Community Congress to be held at Selly Oak, Birmingham, in September. George Lee and I were privileged to represent Toc H at this gathering, and I have been asked to share something of it.

To document the event fully would require at least one book. It was a packed five days of talks, discussion groups, acts of worship, Bible studies, exhibitions and even a disco! Those present represented a wide variety of Christian practice and perspectives. They came from long standing religious orders, and new experimental communes; from

Iona and Othona; from Corrymeela and from Little Gidding; from ordinary parish life and from wholefood co-operatives; from Arts Centres and from Peace organisations. Yet, despite the diversity, there was clear common ground in the commitment to the way of Jesus, and to each other, and to trying to discover what the Church is called to be and do in our day.

As the Congress developed, three main strands emerged as the major messages, both from the guest speakers, and from discussion groups. These were a concern for the poor, a concern for peace, and a concern for unity.

The most dominant message was the emphatic reminder that Christians are on the side of the poor. Jesus identified clearly with the oppressed, the unloved, the rejected — those, in fact, who were excluded from society and from community. If we are to really try and follow him, we cannot escape the implications of that fact. We were reminded again and again that the Church should be calling into question the structures of society, and the patterns of power and privilege, and should be ready to risk the disapproval and, if necessary, persecution, that might arise from such a stance. (As I write, some West German Bishops are under attack for making 'political' statements, which seems to be the normal reaction when Christian leaders try to lead.) Bishop Leslie Newbiggin, who conducted daily Bible studies, argued that the tragedy of modern Christianity is that it has become 'privatized' and is seen to be relevant to personal life, not public issues. He pointed out that the early Church was

towns also have 'twin towns' and here lies opportunities for international action, eg for exchange visits by disabled people.

All BBC and Independent Television, and radio stations have been informed of IYDP and a number of special programmes are being planned for 1981 in which the needs of disabled people will be made known through existing popular programmes (including fictional stories and magazine programmes) at popular viewing times. Stress will be laid on success stories, participation and integration, prevention and specific issues such as employment, access and mobility. The Post Office will be issuing special IYDP stamps in August 1981.

Prince Charles has accepted the invitation of the IYDP Committees of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to be their patron. Kit Aston, Chairman of the Disabled Sports Foundation is now Chairman of IYDP for England.

In conclusion, some suggestions which Toc H Branches might make to get appropriate bodies such as Local Authorities, Health Authorities, churches etc to support IYDP are:

1. Draw to the attention of Chief Officers of (a) Leisure Departments (b) Social Services Departments and (c) Education Departments.
2. Provide a Co-ordinating Officer for the area.
3. Join the Regional British Sports Association for the Disabled. Headquarters address: Stoke Mandeville Sports Stadium for the Paralysed and other Disabled, Harvey Road, Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury, Bucks.

persecuted precisely because it had made its message public, and so threatened the status quo. Had the Christians in Rome, he argued, been content to keep their religion private, they would never have been persecuted. It was their public testimony to another God than Caesar which led to their suffering, and challenged their generation.

Coupled with that, there was also a repeated reminder that the way of Christ is the way of peace, and there was an overwhelming view that no Christian could be true to his belief while content that his safety, freedom and life style depended on our national capacity to destroy millions of foreigners (or the capacity of 'friendly' countries to do it for us!) Whatever the arguments about 'just wars', there is no way that it can be just, or defensible, to threaten to destroy millions of innocent people, and even the planet itself, to defend our freedom and privileged way of life. Yet those that stand up and say this publicly run the

4. Involve special schools.
5. Promote special sessions, instructional courses in swimming pools and sports centres.
6. Encourage integration between disabled and able bodied sportsmen.
7. Form new clubs for the disabled.
8. Provide special entertainment and concerts in venues which will allow those in wheelchairs and other disabled persons to attend.
9. Promote exhibitions in Art Galleries and other public buildings of disabled people's arts and crafts.
10. Produce directory of clubs for disabled people.
11. Promote playschemes for disabled children.
12. Organise indoor games, competitions, eg chess, Monopoly, draughts, hang-gliding.
13. List all buildings which cater for the disabled.
14. Employ at least one disabled person in every Leisure Department.
15. Civic recognition for Disabled Organisations.
16. Set aside money for providing access into public buildings.
17. Provide more public toilet facilities for disabled people.
18. Encourage local Sports Advisory Councils and other able bodied organisations to involve the disabled in their activities.
19. Help with publicity and distribution of publicity material through Council outlets.
20. Use the official IYDP Logo in designs for carpet beds in public parks and gardens.
21. Special church services.

very risk of being deemed, at best, hopelessly idealistic, and at worst, subversive lefties. God's will does not cease to be God's will because some suspect subversives agree with it. In any event, the Romans probably thought the early Christians were, at best, hopelessly idealistic, and at worst, subversive lefties!

The third main strand to emerge was a sense of deep sorrow and pain that, despite a sense of unity on so many other points, it was still not possible for everyone present to share a common Eucharist.

True, many people present did cross denominational boundaries; and were welcomed at the Eucharist with joy. But others felt that until the various denominations had agreed, they should keep the rules and worship separately. The sense of unity in all other aspects threw into sharp relief the tragedy of the disunity of the Christian family at the point of the Eucharist.

1981-International Year of Disabled People

Plans are already well in the pipeline for next year's events. What follows below is a list of some of the local activities planned for 1981 which have been notified to the IYDP office:

- * Special exhibitions in local libraries, building societies and shops.
- * Exhibitions at County Shows.
- * Delegations in wheelchairs to inaccessible buildings.
- * Lobbying MPs and Councillors and arranging special meetings with them.
- * Meetings with local Chambers of Commerce, employers, Trades Councils and Trades Unions to discuss local employment opportunities for disabled people.
- * Requests to local press and radio for coverage of events and special features.
- * Persuading a prominent local person (eg The Mayor) to be in a wheelchair for a day and find out about local access problems with the press in attendance.

Local Authorities have been advised of IYDP and, along with local women's, youth, church, fund raising, political and community organisations, local press and radio, should be invited to send representatives to local Associations' planning meetings.

Please find out what is being planned in your area and let us have your news. For any queries, please contact the YDP office at 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. Tel. 01 626 4066. The secretary is Stephen Crampton.

Yet, despite the talks, despite the discussions, despite the resolutions and reports, the abiding memory for all will surely be the fact that, for a few days, nearly 300 very different Christians actually 'lived' community. There was a very great deal of caring, of sharing, of listening and of helping. Many people were affirmed in their significance, comforted in the anxieties and sorrows, and challenged to move forward. As Jean Vanier (founder of 'L'Arche') put it in his opening address, affirmation, comfort and challenge are the three requisites of human growth. As a Movement which claims to be in the 'growth' business, we could do worse than ask ourselves how much we, as members of Toc H, affirm, comfort and challenge each other, and those outside Toc H. It is not a bad recipe for community, and that includes Branch, house or project.

See also 'Christian Community' by Pauline Warner on p 10.

A Christian Community

by Pauline Warner

Beeston Christian Community House was set up in 1975 by a small group of local church members, three of whom now act as its trustees. Although the House is independent of any one local church, it aims to work with and complement the witness of all denominations. The simplest way to explain the principles of the House is to look at the two different aspects of the word 'community' in the name. It is firstly a religious community — five Christians of any denomination living together as an unrelated family. The life of the House is centred around our weekly celebration of Holy Communion; this service, held every Wednesday evening, is open to anybody to join and the local clergy take it in turns to preside for us. But we also aim to live out our faith in the wider community through voluntary work and by being an open house to anyone in need.

The House is registered as an Independent Trust with the Charity Commissioners and is being bought through a mortgage. Quite a few local church members have given loans to help us secure the mortgage. When we have paid off these loans we hope to be able to support a full time worker for the House: four residents will work in ordinary jobs and pay to support a fifth to work full time for the House. Over the past two years, working as a Long Term Volunteer I have been able to fulfil that role and develop projects and contacts with local organisations and churches.

When I first started, we worked out a list of ideas for involvement and there followed the inevitable period of experimenting and failures! But at least through trying out those ideas I was able to establish contacts and discover areas of real need. One of the most satisfying aspects of the last two years is that I feel that we have moved on from dreaming up theoretical ideas. Now the House is well established as part of the network of local voluntary services and my work is a response to needs which have been brought to our attention and actual requests for help. For the past few months I have been working on setting up an Abbeyfield Trust House for the elderly, organising a summer playscheme for local children, running a weekly social group in a block of flats for the elderly and working on the opening stages of the new Nottinghamshire Hospice. The other

members of Community House are also involved with these activities in their spare time as well as other voluntary work as individuals. In addition to these main projects, we try to run the House as an 'Open Door' where people can come if they need help or simply to meet one another. We hold regular 'hunger lunches' to raise money for Christian Aid, and give 'community lunches' when we invite different people from various organisations and churches for a meal, hopefully giving people who would not otherwise meet a chance to get together.

But although community work has obviously taken up a great deal of my time I have seen my job not as an amateur social worker but as a representative of a specifically Christian community. It seemed equally important, for example, that I should spend time establishing an ecumenical Bible Study group in the House or that I should simply be around as a contact person and as someone with time to reflect about 'community living'.

Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche Communities, has written that for the first month of living 'in community' all your fellow members are saints, in the second month they become devils and then in the third they are just ordinary human beings. I think that I can trace similar stages in my view of 'community living'. For a while I was very idealistic and thought that this was 'it', the way for Christians to live and 'fellowship', 'discipline', 'life style', were favourite parts of my vocabulary. Then I began to see the artificiality of the idea; we were, in fact, being very self conscious about doing things which other people who did not live 'in community' did quite naturally. Now I can see the idea in perspective as neither the only form of Christian life style nor just playing a game. I now believe that living 'in community' is something which is open to some Christians, maybe only for a short time in their lives. They are not better than other Christians but their experience highlights lessons from which all can learn, and they have a responsibility to share their experience with all Christians. I must admit to having little time for communities who celebrate only their small group and make no effort to include other people in their vision.

Indeed the most valuable lessons which I have learned all stem from the fact that in our House ordinary life is inextricably linked with worship. For most people, worship is something which happens in a separate building among people that they probably do not see for the rest of the week, and it is easy to divide worship from ordinary, daily life. You cannot do that when the place of worship is your own front room among people that you

are living with for the rest of the week. So I have come to understand that the thanksgiving for the great acts of Salvation which we celebrate in the Eucharist begins with the thanksgiving for the small things of every day. Confession is no longer something which appears in Dave Allen sketches but an acknowledgement of our continual inability to live up to the standards of Christ. More than once the prayer of Confession in the Communion Service has been anything but a vain repetition as I have struggled with feelings of guilt and hurt and resentment over something which has been said or done in the past week. And more than once I have sensed a real feeling of renewal by the end of the service: when you have shared together in the same bread and wine, human differences seem very petty. And passing the Peace is a sign that we love and accept one another as we are now, not when we become perfect. In fact, I more and more come to see that 'community living' is about this kind of forgiveness which is probably never articulated because it is about living with one another from day to day, and loving one another, faults, failings, warts and all.

I have learned other things as well: that 'community' does not mean an amorphous mass of people spending all their time together but a group of individuals with their own personalities and interest who are united because they are sharing the same spiritual journey; that 'community' is not for people who cannot bear to be on their own but for people who can recognise their own and other people's uniqueness and can respect the need for each person to be alone. And although I would still be the first to protest hotly at any suggestion that 'a woman's place is in the home', I now appreciate the importance of being a home maker, somebody to care for the house and be around during the day to turn it from a building into a home, a place where you can put down roots and relax rather than a building to go out from and 'do' your Christian service. Increasingly, I appreciate that Christian life style, 'in community' or not, is not about finding God in extraordinary or heroic things but in everyday life.

I have lost a great deal of my early intense idealism. Every now and then I realise how fine is the distinction between finding God in ordinary life, which is an appreciation of His grace, and being satisfied with things now, which is downright complacency. The continuing challenge for me is to find the balance between a prophetic idealism for things as they should be, and a gratitude and understanding for things as they are.

See also 'Community Congress 1980' by John Mitchell on p 8/9.

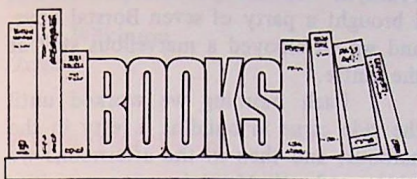


Our Patron – HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, celebrated her 80th birthday on 4 August this year. The Director wrote to send loyal and affectionate greetings from Toc H members around the world and received the following letter from Her Majesty's Private Secretary:

'Thank you very much for your letter of 25th July which I have handed to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Queen Elizabeth asks me to tell you how touched she is by your kind thought in writing as you did and how greatly she appreciates the message of loyal and affectionate birthday greetings which you have conveyed to Her Majesty from Toc H members throughout the world.'

Her Majesty The Queen Mother at the formal opening of Clayton House in 1978.



Saturday Parent by Peter Rowlands

Pub. George Allen & Unwin (£4.95)

This is a timely book, written in a spirit of practical understanding for the one in five of parents – usually a father – who, following separation or divorce, have access to their children only occasionally – 'Saturday Parents'. Based mainly on interviews with such parents, but also including interviews with parents who have custody, children (of all ages) of separated parents, social workers, doctors, magistrates, teachers and psychologists who have been involved with such parents and children, the book is a valuable synthesis of all points of view.

Sadly, it is a debatable point how far the basic premises of patience, understanding, tolerance, compromise, open, honest communication, sympathetic listening and the giving of time rather than money, can be implemented in a relationship which is already in difficulty. Nevertheless, Rowlands gives a careful step by step guide to cover the initial stages and the long term, which may, through its clear, unemotional and unbiased style, encourage those concerned at least to try.

It might therefore have been of greater help to the 'Saturday Parent' to have given the book a wider ranging title, since many of the problems of access could be helped by great understanding on the part of the parent with custody and even by older children themselves.

However, in addressing himself only to the 'Saturday Parent', admittedly with a view to reducing their sense of uniqueness, loneliness, guilt and failure, Rowlands in a way increases that which he seeks to reduce, for the problems of communication are two way. How much more effective therefore might the book have been, even with only its original purpose in mind, had it been addressed to all participants in the problem of access.

The gains involved in coping successfully with separation and access accrue not only to the 'Saturday Parent', but to the other parent, to the children and to society in general, through the mitigation of problems resulting from emotional under nourishment and expressed guilt, as Rowlands amply demonstrates in his case studies. The insights the book offers into the relationship between parents and children, particularly the way this alters as the child matures, are of value to all parents, separated or not; similarly the step by step guide to opening up communication between child and parent. A similar guide for use between parents would have been invaluable!

Anne Richardson

Dealing with Death by W M Bowden

Published by NCVO's Bedford Square Press

'There are two things about death which are not usually said. The first is that it is very expensive. The second is that you meet some surprisingly good people when you find yourself dealing with death.'

These sentences open the introduction to this short, practical and very presentable guide for those suddenly finding themselves having to handle somebody's death. Many people today assume that

the welfare state will not only look after you when you are alive, but bury you decently when you are dead! Well, there is a state death grant of £30 but in 1980 burial costs can easily be as high as £500 and can rarely be less than £200. This booklet introduces us easily and sensitively to the people we must deal with at a time of bereavement – often when we are too upset and worried to notice what useful and interesting people they are.

We meet in successive chapters a funeral director, a sub-district registrar, a DHSS clerk, a Friendly Society lodge secretary, a 'helper' and a solicitor. In each case, we are given key facts, important addresses and sound advice.

This excellent booklet has been published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society. It should be on sale in your local bookshop at 95p or you can get it by post from Macdonald and Evans Distribution Service, Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PZ for £1.10p.

FGR

In our July issue, we published reviews of three of the Religious Education Press booklets in their 'Faith in Action' series. This excellent series is still being extended. The latest publications are *Mission for a Pilot* (The story of Gp Capt Leonard Cheshire VC) and *The Killer Who Cried* (Nicky Cruz) – both by R J Owen; *God's Special Army* (William Booth) by Geoffrey Hanks; and *In the Streets of Calcutta* (Mother Theresa) by Audrey Constant. These handsomely printed and produced booklets – and the 20 or so others in the series – are available from Religious Education Press, Hennock Road, Exeter EX2 8RP at 60p each.

FGR

Open Forum

Inter-Faith Dialogue

I do not believe that Jesus would be as harsh and condemnatory towards people of other Faiths as Phyllis Harden (November issue) obviously does. My impression of Jesus, from reading the Gospels, is of someone who knew that God's will for His creation could best be expressed through love. To this end, Jesus was always ready to meet, listen to and talk with everyone, whether they were Jewish orthodox, Samaritan heretics or pagan Greeks or Romans. When He found spiritual insights in non-Jews He held them up as examples to His co-religionists. His condemnation was for those who believed that scriptural teaching from the past contained the whole truth and who were thereby prevented from perceiving new spiritual insights when these were offered.

We have always to bear in mind the limitations of language. All Biblical scholars testify to the difficulty of conveying in English the shades of meaning contained in the original Aramaic, Hebrew or Greek. How much more must this be so when what we are trying to convey is a brief glimpse of eternal reality. Our perception of God and of His will for Man is a spiritual experience which we try to express through totally inadequate language. This is a limitation we must accept, but we should not allow it to limit our perception.

It is also well to remember that lawmakers follow the prophets. We all seek guidance on how to apply the spiritual insights to the everyday business of living. The interpretation and application is usually by people who, lacking the original experience, have to make do with the written account. The words thus assume an authority which properly belongs to the experience. So the lawmaker distorts the teaching of the prophet.

If we are not to fall into the ecclesiastical trap of believing that ancient thought forms have somehow been authenticated by usage, we must constantly test the truth of what we are told against the fact of God's love. I think the majority of us have hardly begun to understand the teachings of Jesus, as distinct from the teachings of religious leaders. Judging from results that is.

So we have to try to get the truth behind the words. I find that the spiritual teachings of other Faiths often help me to understand better my own Faith. I am not surprised by this. Since we are all on a spiritual journey, some must be further along the way than others, and I am in

no position to judge who is in front of whom. It is not that the teachings of Jesus are deficient and need augmenting, but that the way in which they are conveyed sometimes obscures the meaning for me. It seems perfectly natural that different emphases from a different cultural background should prove enlightening.

There are differences between the various religious traditions and I do not think it is helpful to pretend otherwise. But behind these differences there is a universal spiritual experience about the God-Man relationship. The greater our understanding of that spiritual experience and its interpretation through different cultures, the more shall we realise the greatness of the glory of God. It is that which is the ultimate objective of us all.

Tom Gulliver
Bristol

May I comment on the letter by Phyllis Harden? Although she says she is not a member of Toc H, she certainly reflects the high ideals required for membership of the Movement.

Her letter on Inter-Faith Dialogue expresses the facts of the Christian Faith very succinctly. In these days of woolly thinking, the desire to be all things to all men and the mad urge to change everything, it is very refreshing to find that there are still people who can think clearly. So many of our churches are full of idols and false ideologies. We are told that the youth of today, despite advanced education cannot understand the language of the Authorised Version and the Book of Common Prayer which have been our foundation for centuries.

What a tragedy it is that our spiritual leader by his own statements has not the conviction and the clear force of expression shown in your correspondent's letter. Without this conviction and this faith we can never enter the Kingdom of God.

Eric Varty
Cheshire

The Old House

I would be grateful if you would allow me to add to what was said in the October *Point Three* on this subject.

Whatever happens regarding the staffing of the Old House, it is certain that the building will remain a very costly proposition. Tubby always saw this very clearly, and therefore challenged the membership to provide an adequate endowment so that the necessary subsidy

was always available. Unfortunately his hopes were never realised, and the Talbot House Endowment Fund is very inadequate. If members feel as Philip Boyle does, they can make gifts now, or make provision in their wills, so ensuring that Talbot House remains an important fount of the spirit for future generations.

Keith Rea
Toc H International Secretary

Port Penrhyn

I have just returned from a one week work camp at your centre at Port Penrhyn. With one other member of staff I brought a party of seven Borstal boys, and we all enjoyed a marvellous stay at the centre.

Each morning we worked until the tide came in building a jetty in the harbour, and then in the afternoons we tried our hand at various water activities – canoeing, sailing etc.

The facilities at the centre were first class and the centre staff were great, ensuring we got the most from our activities, and were helpful in everything we did.

B Phillips
Glen Parva, Leicester

Toc H and Politics

Your correspondents' reactions (October issue) are exciting and interesting about this business of 'religion and politics'; so much so that it makes one write too often to *Point Three*! Surely, though, the re-birth of Toc H, that is essential in every generation, relies on thought and action to do with this very question. Politics challenge one's religious beliefs. Politics challenge the Toc H member with the question, 'Do you want to extend the good you do in your neighbourhood to the millions in want?' If we remain rooted only in our neighbourhoods – however essential it is to be rooted there; and however difficult we know that to be – we can be accused of being illogical. This is not, of course, the idea of a few in Toc H. It is the soul and body of Christianity. I must repeat – not just to praise Him but to help us – that the greatest re-incarnation of that 'spirit body' is in that founder member of Toc H, Lord MacLeod of Fuinary. We do not, generally, realise yet how much his thought and action have contributed to the Churches in the 20th century, and how much more it could contribute – to the Churches, to Toc H, to the world.

Ken Prideaux-Brune's October article is as sharp and disturbing as a spur. Many of us, though, would, I am sure, like him to enlarge on '... Geoff Cleaver's reference to "the collapse of the divine right of authority" as one of the hopeful signs for the future'. We get a tantalising glimpse of the meaning here, but, however valuable that glimpse is, we deserve more — perhaps a whole article on this from him. The other reference, relevant to 'religion/politics', is in Ken Prideaux-Brune's magnificent phrase, 'If power corrupts so does powerlessness'. He continues, 'There is within most of us a craving for authority and a fear of personal responsibility'.

Oliver Wilkinson
Oxford

Where it all started

I am sorry that E W Nottle (November issue) took offence at my article in the June issue. It was certainly not meant to give 'an erroneous picture of Toc H' nor do I think it did. It was intended simply to give a light hearted account of a trip to Popering.

It often appears to me that Toc H has lost its sense of fun. Do we only think of fellowship in terms of service to others? Whilst this is a very valid and important way of building friendships, it is not the only way and I believe we should all, sometimes, take life by the horns and do things 'just for the fun of it'.

Graham Irwin
Bromley, Kent

Money Matters

At our last Branch meeting, a paper from our REC dealing with Regional income and expenditure was considered. This letter is not meant to criticise our Region whose expenditure had gone up by only 4% in a year of 19.8% inflation. But nationally there was a 12.73% increase and our assets are dwindling.

We did wonder whether our Regional staff could be better deployed. The Regional structure was designed to decentralise. Regional staff are supposed to seek contact and visit Branches — a task well nigh impossible in spite of their gallant efforts. Outlying and smaller Branches never see a staff member and consequently query the value of the Regional organisation. The District rather than the Region is admirably designed to enable members to inter-relate. We are not advocating the

abolition of Regional offices. They should remain and no doubt staff will find full employment in their respective chambers — probably with their burdens eased a bit by a reduction in their self inflicted expense account administration.

We wondered too about our Region's suggestion that individual members' contributions needed to rise to £10 pa. We understand the reasons for the suggestion but is it not self defeating. Such an increase will only frighten off those aging members trying to make ends meet on an old age pension. Many Branches are unable to generate enough fund raising to meet their basic costs... The pressure must be taken off them.

Let us try to be constructive in our aim to produce a steady growth of income and to erase our annual deficit. Perhaps we can learn from such success stories as those of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Sunshine Fund for Blind Children. Their income from membership fees is supplemented by the sale of an extensive assortment of gift goods and by advertising in their excellent publications. We have barely touched this field. Our sale of Toc H sweaters is hampered by amateurish distribution; our gift subscription vouchers and Christmas cards lack appeal; our posters and lapel badges, though bold in concept, are not saleable commodities.

We suggest:

- a. Regional offices should have well stocked gift shops. They could carry sweaters, scarves and ties, ashtrays, glasses and mugs, notelets, diaries and calendars, wallets, ballpoints, disposable picnic plates, tea towels, shopping bags — the list is endless. The Toc H emblem must be seen so often that it is recognised again by the man in the street. Maybe then the legacies figure will increase by more than 1.96%.
- b. Branches should be able to draw on these stocks for their coffee mornings, festivals and guest nights. ... Wendover should organise purchasing and distribution. Regional offices and Toc H Centres should cover their own costs and Branches add to the prices as part of their fund raising. Each gift item should carry a leaflet explaining Toc H.
- c. Advertisers should be found for *Point Three*.
- d. Postage costs for *Point Three* should be raised by a raffle. Tickets (5 for 50p) could be placed in each copy of the January or March issue.

Ours is a fortunate Branch. . . well able to meet our family purse commitments. But there are many small Branches of 'ancient mariners' who find it impossible to face increasing costs. Only a younger generation with renewed interest will rekindle their lamps.

All members of Llanarmon-yn-Ial Branch
Clwyd, North Wales

A Shining Light

Once again Christmas will soon be with us and we shall be celebrating the birth of the child Jesus and with it all the other good cheer that comes at this festive season.

Christmas also heralds the end of one year and the advent of a new year. For those less fortunate than the rest of us, life is a struggle from one to the next — always with the hope that the coming year might be better. It may well be better for some next year, since 1981 is the International Year of Disabled Persons. Here in Westgate, Kent, at Lourdes House, every year is the year of the Disabled Person. This year the doors of Lourdes House will be wide open for the less fortunate and the spirit of Christmas will shine forth across Westgate Bay as a symbol of hope for those in need. The saddest story that came to my attention this year is about a 13 year old boy, disabled, totally rejected by his parents, and cared for only by his 74 year old grandmother. He had nothing to look forward to this Christmas, until Jean Anderton opened the doors of Lourdes House for them both. So, please, remember when you are getting ready for your festive season to spare a thought for Lourdes House! Start the International Year of the Disabled in December and not in January with a Christmas donation to their wonderful work.

Fred Cooper
Chairman, Thanet DEC

Note: The full story of Lourdes House was told in the June 1977 issue of *Point Three*. Jean Anderton, after losing her own handicapped son, opened up a seaside home to any family struggling to bring up a handicapped child. Three families at a time can relax together in this comfortable and loving home. Donations (including Green Shield stamps) may be sent to: The Hon Treasurer, Dominic Anderton Memorial Fund, Lourdes House, Royal Esplanade, Westbrook, Margate, Kent CT9 5DX.

— Editor

We will Remember...

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In July

Albert H Roberts (Weston Rhyn)

In August

Hubert Baines (Morecambe)

Robert C Morris (Hartley Wintney)

In September

Alon C Ap-Thomas (Gwynedd District)

Rev C R S 'Charles' Enys (Falmouth)

Sidney Everatt (Weston Rhyn)

Henry W Hall (Elmstead)

Sidney Higbee (Inner London District)

Phyllis M Holland (Richmond-Surrey)

Cecil Horne (Andover)

Freda N Hurt (Ashfield District)

Edna M Pickett (Corsham)

Joseph (Jo) Thompson (Durdham Down)

Albert Wilkinson (Accrington)

In October

E G 'Ernie' Cooper (Twydall)

Alice Sixsmith (Llandudno Central)

Winifred E M Smith (E C & Tower Hill)

Charles Uden (Hythe)

Edgar B Wilkinson (Cheltenham)

Also in December 1979 -

J B 'Jim' Wilkinson (Western Approaches District)

You will have read in the last issue of the sudden death of Sid Higbee, Verger and Parish Clerk of All Hallows by the Tower. Sid had been at All Hallows for over 14 years, and, with his wife Gladys, had grown to be a central part of the life of Tower Hill.

A SE Londoner born and bred, he met Gladys at an early age when he went to her mother for piano lessons. His music was to remain with him throughout his life. Sid and Gladys have four children and through the boys' contact with the Scout movement got to know Colin Cuttall and the South London Industrial Mission. Brian became a chorister at Southwark Cathedral and both Sid and Gladys became involved in the life of the Mission.

Sid's working life started with the Co-operative movement where he rose from a milk roundsman in London to a departmental manager in Cardiff after the war. On returning from Cardiff, he managed a small dairy in Mitcham but eventually gave this up due to Gladys's ill health at the time. In 1962 he joined the Toc H Movement and in February 1964 both he and Gladys were appointed Caretakers at Toc H Headquarters at 15 Trinity Square. From their windows they

could see the church which was to become home to them for 14 years.

In May 1966 Sid resigned his job with Toc H and was invited by his friend Colin Cuttall, the then Vicar of All Hallows to become Verger and Parish Clerk on the retirement of Charles Tisshaw (Tish). For both Sid and Gladys their involvement with the life of All Hallows was a new lease of life. Gladys helped with catering and hospitality and Sid not only cared for the building - a major task - but developed his own lay ministry of welcome to all who came to the church.

Sid Higbee was a man of firm will and strong integrity who knew his own mind but always listened to others. He was unfailing in his duties as Parish Clerk and Verger and both he and Gladys were always at the Sunday family service as worshippers giving of themselves. Sid believed in people and it was in the realm of a ministry to all those who came to the church that he excelled himself. Nothing was too much trouble for him, be it explaining a piece of history, helping someone in need or controlling a difficult vagrant. His open face greeted nearly everyone and All Hallows has become known over the past decade and a half by 'Sid'.

He is sorely missed by us all and our sadness is shared by the many people who showed their own sorrow by the thousands of flowers which were sent to honour him at his funeral. We offer our profound thanks to God for this unique man and for his Christian life. To his family we offer our prayers for the future and our thanks for their own individual contributions to our life, especially to Gladys who will always be part of our family here at All Hallows.

Peter Delaney

Scarborough Joint Branch write to tell us of the death of Ernest Calvert at the age of 82. He was a member for more than 40 years and a Builder for the past two years. He had always been a most active Toc H worker and was helping with the Scarborough Hospital library trolley to the end. Scarborough members greatly feel the loss of this fine man.

Twydall (Kent) Joint Branch report the death of 'Ernie' Cooper - one of their founder members - at the age of 82. Despite moving out of the area some time ago, he joined in Branch meetings when he could and never lost interest in Twydall's activities.

Alice Sixsmith, Secretary and a founder member of Llandudno Central (Gwynedd) Women's Branch, died recently at the age of 75. The Branch's acting secretary writes: '... She was much loved by us all. Alice was the first volunteer for any job, which she did quietly and without fuss. We never heard a harsh word from her: she saw good in every one. She was our representative on the Blind Committee, Standing Conference and Citizens Advice Bureaux and she worked tirelessly for the Elderly People's Centre at an age when she might have expected others to wait on her ...'

Frank Greening - who died in September, first joined the Movement some 45 years ago. For many years he was an active member of Enfield Branch and even when he retired and moved away, he retained a close association with them, visiting the Branch whenever he could. His friends in Enfield miss him greatly.

We give thanks for their lives

The Weaver

Just three years ago, Janet Rauch and her husband lost a very dear daughter. Lynn had recently married, was beginning a promising teaching career and was radiantly happy. And suddenly she died. Her parents have grown to accept their loss though they still ask why it had to happen. One of the first letters received by Janet and her husband after their bereavement included some verses which they have found very helpful. They have now asked us to print these verses in the hope that they might bring comfort and help to others. If any readers recognise the verses and can give any information about their source, Janet would like to hear from them: send your letters to us and we will forward them. - Editor

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me.
I may not choose the colours:
He weaveth steadily.
Oft-time he weaveth sorrow
And I, in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the under side

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skilful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

Welcome

The following Branches elected new members during September and October:

- 4 - Southampton Magpies (j)
- 3 - Warrington District (Lymm (Toc H) Action Group)
- 2 - Clevedon (j), Ipswich (m), South Yorkshire District
- 1 - Cefn Coed (m), Colchester (w), Colwyn Bay (m), Corsham (w), Crieff (j), Crewkerne (j), Exmouth (w), Falmouth (j), Finchley & Whetstone (w), Gloucester (j), Hatherleigh (j), Hitchin (m), Mark VII (j), Melton Mowbray (m), Mid Norfolk District, Nailsea (w), Overseas Central, Pinchbeck West (j) Redcar (j) Group, Rochdale (w), Seaton Carew (w), St Annes (j).

A warm welcome to 35 new members.



Photo: D C Thomson & Co Ltd

Kevin Campbell, a member of Dundee Joint Group is heavily involved in hospital broadcasting. When he recently celebrated his 21st birthday, his mother baked an unusual cake: it contained a small electric motor which drove a record turntable! Kevin's busy mother also did all the catering for his birthday party, feeding more than 100 guests.

Please Note

The Wendover HQ offices will be closed from 5 pm on 23 December until 9 am on 5 January.

Manchester Children's Camp

by Christine Platt

Even after accidents to helpers and floods, the Toc H Manchester Children's Camp is still going and keen to celebrate its 32nd year next summer with five more weeks at Rhyl Toc H Centre.

This year, one helper decided to try the slide at the park and ended up breaking a finger - the only serious accident, I'm pleased to say. Our second week unfortunately brought floods - I thought it was only Manchester that had rain in those quantities!

Most of the children do not bring a change of clothes so you can imagine what it was like - seven bags of wet, smelly articles taken along to the local coin operated wash shop, and after feeding 50p pieces into the large dryers at the most furious rate, the clothes were just about dry. Needless to say, the children had to run around in night clothes for the rest of the evening so their other things could be aired for morning.

For my sins I was cook on the third week of camp and arrived on the Saturday to find that the hot water geyser had gone off and the big extractor fan had broken and that the workmen would be coming in that week to repair

both. Well, after trying to cook for 56 with three days of Welsh workmen hammering, drilling and swearing (in Welsh) everything got back to normal. I did find out that Welsh workmen like just as many cups of tea as their English counterparts!

May I say here a big thank you to Conway Branch who put up with 40 children and helpers each Wednesday afternoon. John gave the children a wonderful trip round the castle and then took them on the boats and the children and helpers thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and believe it or not we did not have one person 'overboard' whilst in the boats - a few near misses but those do not count!

The new grill at the Rhyl Centre - presented by the officers and crew of HMS Rhyl - was well and truly christened as was the fryer they presented a couple of years back. This was used for the Manchester Camp speciality, 'Jam Butty Fritters' - fattening but fun!

Thanks to everyone at Rhyl for all the help they gave us and for putting up with us for those five weeks - we couldn't do it without you.



Photos: Stanley Aston

Pictures taken during one of the camp outings to Conway.

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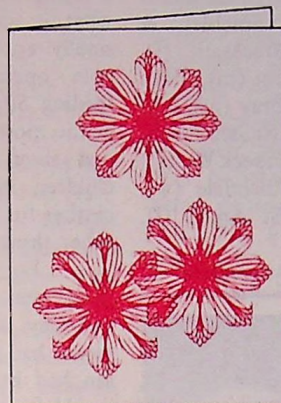
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Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 3p a word (minimum 30p) to Point Three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover. Telephone: 0296 623911.

North Buckinghamshire. For properties in the area between £10,000 and £30,000, please contact Bonner & Son, Chartered Surveyors, 12 Market Square, Buckingham. Telephone: 028 02 2301.

When in Gloucester, why not stay at the Gloucester Friendship Centre. Run by the International Friendship League, whose aims are similar to Toc H, it is open all the year round and parties of up to 35 are most welcome. Ring (0452) 418089 or write to GFC, 7/9 Heathville Road, Gloucester.



Bruges, Belgium. Hotel Jacobs, (established 50 years) welcomes Toc H parties and individual visitors to this lovely old city within easy reach of other famous cities of art, and of the coast. Comfortable, modernised hotel. Strongly recommended. Bed and breakfast only. Parking. English spoken. Mr Jules Lietaert, Hotel Jacobs, Baliestraat 1, Bruges, 8000. Telephone: 010-32-50 3398 31/32.

Weymouth - Bed, breakfast and evening meal. Winter weekend breaks £13.50. Weeks from £40. Open all year including Christmas. Bar, free parking, reductions children and small coach parties. Mrs Cole, Kirtleton House, 21 Kirtleton Avenue, Weymouth. Telephone: 0305 785296.

Christian Fellowship Contacts. Marriage Introduction. Singles holidays/houseparties. Local Group events. Nationwide. Christian Friendship Fellowship, Dept B/23B, Edenthorpe, Doncaster. Sincere males especially welcome.

Conwy, dinner and B & B. Weekends, mid-week bookings, ideal for walking, touring, near sea and mountains. Terms £48 per week. Doreen and Bill Baxter, Llys Gwilym Guest House, 3 Mountain Road, Cadnant Park, Conwy, N Wales. Telephone: 049 263 2351.

Folkestone, The Adams Family offer you that comfort and service you deserve for your holiday. Comfortable rooms fully centrally heated, good home cooking and good fellowship, we're Toc H members of course. Groups, retreats, seminars, parties of 10 or more at special rates. Brochure and terms on request. Bright & Lil Adams, Claremont Private Hotel, Claremont Road, Folkestone, Kent. Tel. Folkestone (0303) 54897.

Christmas presents. Launton Handbell Ringers, as heard at Dor Knap, have a newly released Record of Folk, Classical and Christmas music. Price £4 + 75 p & p from Members or Mrs Meyrick, 11 Tarrant Avenue, Witney, Oxon OX8 6EE.

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